

ANNUAL REPORT  
of the  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
for the  
URBAN DISTRICT OF BUCKFASTLEIGH  
for the year 1949.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report as Medical Officer for the year 1949.

i. Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area

Area:- 1365 acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population at the end of 1949:- 2595.

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1949):- 904

Rateable Value:- £14249.

Sum represented by penny rate:- £56. 13. 11d.

The industries and social conditions remain unchanged in the main.

The arrangements made by the County Council for carrying out Local Health Services under Part III of the National Health Service Act 1948 are complete and work satisfactorily.

No action has been taken by the Council under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

ii. Vital Statistics for the year 1949.

	<u>male.</u>	<u>female.</u>	<u>total.</u>
Live Births.	22	19	41
Legitimate	19	18	37
Illegitimate	3	1	4
Deaths of infants under one year: -			1

Birth-rate per 1000 civilian population:- 15.8

Rate per 1000 live births:- 24.4

Deaths	14	22	36
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Death-rate per 1000 Civilian population:- 14.25

Comparative rates for England and Wales during 1949:-

Live Births:-	16.7
Death-rate:-	11.7
Infant death-rate:-	32

The causes of death as supplied by the Registrar General are as follows:-

Diseases of Heart	17
Intracranial vascular lesions	5
Other diseases of circulatory system	3
Cancer	3
Bronchitis	3
Other diseases of respiratory system	1
Nephritis	2
Congenital defects	1
Other diseases	1

The age incidence is interesting

Over 90	1
80 - 90	10
70 - 80	11
60 - 70	7
50 - 60	4
40 - 50	2
1 day	1

The average age at death of 21 people was 80.  
Twelve of the deaths occurred in Hospitals.  
None was caused by infectious or preventible disease.

Forty cases of measles among children attending the School were reported by the Head Master. Many of these lived outside the Urban District. All were of a mild type.

Diphtheria Immunisation is carried out at the Child Welfare Centre, at the Schools and by the local practitioners. I am happy to report that parents have always been most co-operative, and it is improbable that there are many children now unprotected.

iii Housing.

The houses on the Glebelands Estate were completed and occupied during the year, and the serious housing shortage has now been abated.

In my opinion any further extension of the housing programme should be directed towards providing small houses of the bungalow type for old people.

iv. Drainage and Sewerage.

Very little progress has been made towards improving the sewage disposal works.

I regard this matter as urgent. The present works are not capable of dealing adequately with the large amount of trade effluent and it is increasingly difficult to avoid pollution of the River Dart.

v. Water Supply.

(a) The water supply has been satisfactory as to quality, but owing to drought experienced it was necessary to restrict supplies from time to time, but no serious shortage took place. The Council are taking active steps to augment their water supply from other sources.

(b) Two Bacteriological and chemical analyses were taken of the raw water and the water going into supply.

(i) Bacteriologically:- Samples fell into Class 1 of the Ministry of Health's classification for piped water supplies.

(ii) Chemically:- Samples had the characteristics of a moorland water drawn from an unpolluted catchment area and appeared to be satisfactory in all respects although it was plumbosolvent (pH. 6.6).

Occasional contamination of the raw water (due to rabbits at the source) is efficiently dealt with by a chlorination plant, as shown by the reports on the water going into supply.

(iii) The natural plumbosolvency of the water is likewise dealt with by a liming plant.

All the houses now have a piped supply except a few farms and houses on the borders of the district.

vi. Food.

There is no slaughtering done in the district now.

There have been no ~~cutbreaks~~ of food poisoning.

In conclusion I have to thank the Chairman and the Members of the Council for their continued encouragement and support,

I am, Gentlemon,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd.) SYDNEY R. WILLIAMS.

